United Nations A/AC.198/2010/2

General Assembly

Distr.: General
12 February 2010

Original: English

Committee on Information
Thirty-second session
26 April-7 May 2010

Activities of the Department of Public Information: strategic communications services

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The Strategic Communications Division, which is responsible for implementing the subprogramme relating to strategic communications services, formulates communications strategies on priority issues and carries out communications campaigns to support the substantive goals of the Organization. The Division also manages the network of 63 United Nations information centres and offices around the world.

The present report, prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 64/96 B, summarizes the key advances made by the Department from July 2009 to February 2010 in promoting the work of the United Nations to the global audience through its strategic communications services.

10-23872 (E) 050310

Please recycle

Introduction

In its resolution 64/96 B, the General Assembly took note of the reports of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Department of Public Information submitted for consideration by the Committee on Information at its thirty-first session and requested the Secretary-General to continue reporting to the Committee on the activities of the Department.

In the same resolution, the General Assembly called on the Department to provide specific information on a number of its activities for the consideration of the Committee on Information at its thirty-second session. The bureau of the Committee on Information, which met on 1 December 2009, advised the Department to present the requested information in three parts, in accordance with the three subprogrammes of the Department: strategic communications services, news services and outreach services.

The present report,[1] submitted for the consideration of the Committee at its thirty-second session, is divided into two parts. Part One addresses thematic communications campaigns in such areas as peacekeeping, disarmament, the question of Palestine, human rights, climate change, the Millennium Development Goals and the World Summit on the Information Society and Africa, with a focus on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Part Two examines the role and activities of the network of United Nations information centres.

[1] Unless otherwise indicated, the present report covers the activities of the Department for the period from July 2009 to February 2010.

Part One: Communications campaigns

I. Adopting a strategic approach

1. The Department of Public Information is tasked with promoting the work of the United Nations by providing timely, accurate, impartial, comprehensive and coherent information to the widest possible global audience. The Strategic Communications Division, which is responsible for implementing the subprogramme relating to strategic communications services, formulates communications strategies on priority issues and carries out communications campaigns to support the substantive goals of the Organization. The Division also manages the network of 63 United Nations information centres and offices around the world.

2. The Department's strategic approach to communications includes setting the communications priorities for the year, both for the Department and for its global network of offices, reflecting the key issues before the Organization. Coordinated communications campaigns are then developed to reach a global target audience, both directly, through outreach activities carried out by information centres, and through the international media. The integration of new media platforms, including social networking tools such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, are an increasingly important component of the Department's communications strategies.

3. A new publication, *United Nations in Focus*, was initiated by the Department in October 2009 to provide a concise analysis of key trends, developments and issues before the Organization. The inaugural edition featured the achievements of the high-level debate of the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly. It was followed by an edition on food security and a review of the main challenges facing the United Nations during 2009.

Working together with partners in the United Nations system

4. The United Nations Communications Group, now in its ninth year, has emerged as a system-wide communications platform for coordinating and harmonizing United Nations messages on priority issues. During the reporting period, important progress was made towards creating United Nations communications groups at the country level. With the support of the United Nations Development Operations Coordination Office, country-level communications groups have now been established in over 100 countries. These groups are taking the lead in promoting joint United Nations communications at the country level, bringing together creative energies and human resources of members of the United Nations country team in the locations where they serve. Activities undertaken in that regard include the following:

(a) United Nations Communications Group-Argentina: On 12 November 2009, the Group held a daylong workshop for 20 journalists on violence against women. Keynote speakers included a justice from the national Supreme Court and senior officials from the United Nations system;

(b) United Nations Communications Group-Azerbaijan: The group organized five joint field visits and round tables with media representatives;

(c) United Nations Communications Group-Lebanon: In observance of the International Day of Peace, the group produced a special television programme that included statements by seven religious leaders of the country;

(d) United Nations Communications Group-Russian Federation: The group facilitated the issuance of "United Nations in Russia", a bilingual (English and Russian) newsletter that comes out once every two months;

(e) United Nations Communications Group-South Africa: The group has lent support to the South African Model United Nations debating competition for high schools project;

(f) United Nations Communications Group-Thailand: The United Nations Day exhibit at the country's largest shopping complex, held from 22 to 25 October 2009, drew an estimated 20,000 visitors.

II. Thematic campaigns

A. The Department of Public Information and United Nations peace operations

5. During the reporting period, the Department of Public Information worked closely with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support on improving support to public information components of peacekeeping operations, making use of new media technologies and platforms and creating greater public support for United Nations peacekeeping, including through the following activities:

(a) Working in cooperation with peacekeeping missions, the Department disseminated over 100 press releases targeting more than 30 troop- and police-contributing countries, focusing on the contributions by individual Member States to United Nations peacekeeping efforts;

(b) The Department undertook a major maintenance and revamping of the English and French peacekeeping websites, with the result that the mission sites appear at the top of most search engines. Content is updated and refreshed in English and French. Websites in other official languages of the United Nations are in the process of being prepared. The Department of Public Information has also been working with the Department of Political Affairs on updating the content of its website;

(c) The Department of Public Information and the Department of Field Support continued to help peace operations convert to the content management system to support local mission websites, which unifies branding of the missions while also reducing the requirement for mission-based webmasters, as maintaining the sites no longer requires technical expertise. More than 20 peacekeeping and political missions have adopted the new template, with some missions using Arabic, French and Portuguese in addition to English;

(d) The Department of Public Information worked with the Department of Field Support in transforming field personnel recruitment, consistent with new reforms introduced by the Office of Human Resources Management, and in identifying candidates for key posts in public information in peace operations. It also worked with the Department of Field Support on its new database and website created to offer greater transparency regarding the adjudication of conduct and discipline cases in field operations;

(e) The Department's annual "United Nations peace operations 2009: year in review", published in English and French in early 2010, presented a review of current United Nations peacekeeping operations and special political and peacebuilding missions throughout the world;

(f) The United Nations News Centre web portal (www.un.org/news) carried 1,206 English and 1,022 French news articles on peacekeeping matters during the reporting period. News articles in English and French were also distributed via the associated e-mail news service to more than 50,000 subscribers worldwide;

(g) During the reporting period, UNifeed[2] collaborated with peacekeeping missions to produce more than 100 stories;

(h) United Nations Radio produced over 100 peacekeeping-related news and feature stories, including a feature on women in peacekeeping.

Earthquake in Haiti

6. Following the tragic earthquake that struck Haiti in January 2010, the Department supported the Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General in the organization of videoconference briefings with the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) as soon as this was technically feasible. It also worked with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support on using new media platforms to inform staff and the public about the situation in Haiti. The Department helped identify and loan staff to the emergency effort. It also provided regular guidance notes on the situation in Haiti to United Nations field offices, issued fact sheets for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and kept the MINUSTAH website "live".[3]

7. United Nations information centres were mobilized to organize press conferences, give interviews and respond to queries related to the earthquake in Haiti, as well as to follow up on the fate of nationals from the countries where the information centres are located. Many of them, together with others in the United Nations country team, organized commemorative ceremonies marking the first week after the earthquake. United Nations information centres began to place the Secretary-General's op-ed article, "Haiti is not alone", immediately after his visit to Haiti, eventually placing it in more than 50 media outlets. The op-ed was also translated by information centres into Arabic, Danish, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Persian, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Slovak, Slovenian, Thai and Turkish.

Disarmament

8. In 2009, the Department of Public Information launched a multiplatform campaign on nuclear disarmament, involving new media and traditional outreach. The campaign was the first by the Department that used both traditional and new media to promote a strategic communications priority. It was launched in June with the slogan "WMD-We Must Disarm", and it culminated with the International Day of Peace on September 21, during the same week in which a special Security Council meeting was held, along with the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into

[2] UNifeed was established in 2005 as an inter-agency platform to provide global television broadcasters with single-source access to video news stories.

[3] For other Department of Public Information activities related to the Haiti earthquake, please see A/AC.198/2010/3 and A/AC.198/2010/4.

Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, at United Nations Headquarters. The previous week, the annual Department of Public Information/Non-Governmental Organization conference, which took place in Mexico City, was also devoted to disarmament and served as a further vehicle for civil society involvement in the "We Must Disarm" campaign. Additional activities of the Department in the area of disarmament included the following:

(a) By using social networks, the Department was able to attract more people to the United Nations International Day of Peace website, which had 45,000 visitors to all language sites. The social networking platform Twitter enabled the "We Must Disarm" campaign to reach an estimated 1.2 million people, and the Facebook site counted 7,700 members. Messages sent out over Twitter were also screened in the General Assembly Hall just before the general debate in September;

(b) In 2009, the *United Nations Chronicle*, which dedicated a special issue to disarmament (see vol. XLVI, No. 1 and 2), featured articles by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and the Director of the United Nations Mine Action Service.

9. The Department of Public Information also promoted the Secretary-General's proposals on disarmament and non-proliferation through an op-ed piece published in some two dozen newspapers globally and through other products and activities by United Nations information centres, non-governmental organizations and other partners.

Promotion of the "We Must Disarm" campaign using social media

10. The Department promoted the "We Must Disarm" campaign through traditional channels, as well as online through social media websites and the United Nations website. Data showed that social media sites helped to increase the overall traffic to the United Nations International Day of Peace website. As the number of messages sent on Twitter increased from June to September, the number of Twitter and Facebook members increased, as did the number of visits to the United Nations International Day of Peace website.

Figure I
Messages sent on "Twitter" from Headquarters

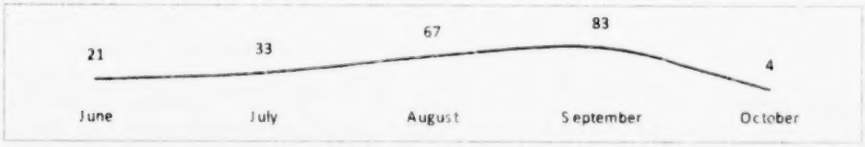


Figure II
Membership: Twitter and Facebook Cause

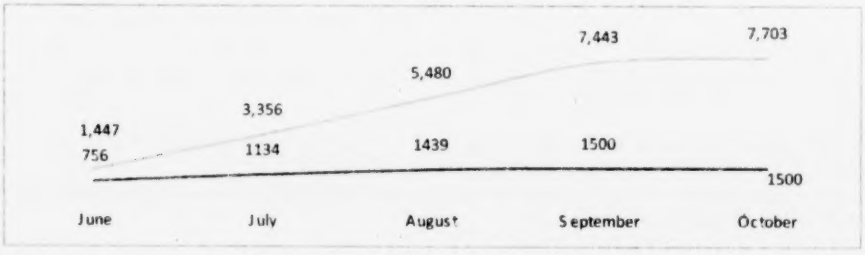
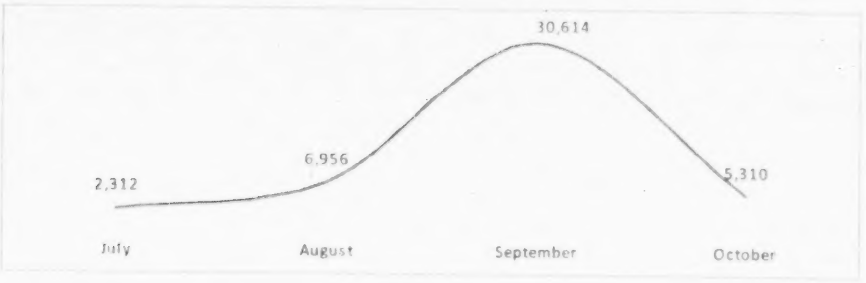


Figure III

Visits to the International Day of Peace website (all language versions)



B. The question of Palestine

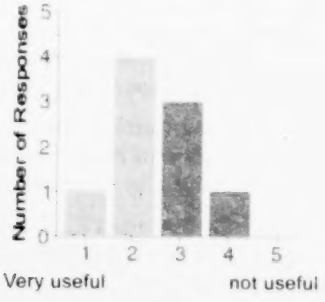
11. The Department carried out a number of activities in connection with its special information programme on the question of Palestine. It organized the 2009 annual training programme for nine young Palestinian journalists (three men and six women) from 9 November to 11 December at United Nations Headquarters. Participants attended workshops and briefings in New York, Geneva and Washington, D.C. A total of 141 Palestinian journalists have been trained since the programme began in 1995.

12. The 2009 programme aimed at strengthening the skills of the participants as broadcast media professionals. A survey conducted at the end of the programme, as demonstrated in figure IV, found that a majority of the participants in the programme found it useful.

Figure IV

How satisfied are you with the programme overall?

How do you evaluate the television production workshop?



Other activities related to the question of Palestine included the following:

(a) The seventeenth International Media Seminar on Peace in the Middle East, in cooperation with the Ministry of External Relations of Brazil, was held in Rio de Janeiro on 27 and 28 July 2009. Four panel discussions took place during the event, which was attended by approximately 200 people. The seminar was extensively covered by major Brazilian media outlets, including Agencia Brasil,

O Globo, *Folha de São Paulo*, *O Estado de São Paulo*, *O Dia* and *Jornal do Brasil*, as well as by media in other parts of the world;

(b) The Department updated and displayed the English version of the permanent exhibit on the question of Palestine at Headquarters in New York, and the French version at the United Nations Office at Geneva. An electronic version of the updated exhibit was also made available online;

(c) As part of the commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), which took place at United Nations Headquarters on 24 September, the Department of Public Information translated the UNRWA press kit into French and printed the kits in Arabic, English and French. The Department also conducted media outreach concerning the event, facilitating interviews for the Commissioner-General of UNRWA with various media outlets, including Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiya.

13. United Nations information centres played an important role in highlighting the sixtieth anniversary of UNRWA, including through the following activities:

(a) The United Nations Information Centre in Warsaw prepared and disseminated background information in Polish;

(b) The United Nations Information Centre in Mexico City displayed the Department of Public Information exhibit on Palestine in Spanish;

(c) The United Nations Information Centre in Tokyo organized a workshop to review efforts of the United Nations, Japan and UNRWA in providing assistance to the Palestinian people.

C. Human rights

Human Rights Day 2009

14. The Department partnered with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in the observance of Human Rights Day around the world. Under the theme "Embrace diversity, end discrimination", some 30 United Nations information centres conducted activities, ranging from film screenings and lectures to the production of radio programmes and translation of key human rights documents into local languages. In addition, the following activities also took place:

(a) The United Nations Information Centre in Bucharest partnered with the National Administration of Penitentiaries to produce a play entitled "Speak Truth to Power" with 14 detainees at the Metropolis Theatre of Bucharest;

(b) The United Nations Information Centre in Pretoria joined with the South African Rugby Union to promote the slogan "Embrace diversity, end discrimination" throughout the International Rugby Sevens Tournament in December. The human rights banner was displayed on the field, and the Secretary-General's message for Human Rights Day was read to the crowd. The event was telecast live and broadcast to more than 140 countries.

15. Both United Nations Television and United Nations Radio promoted human rights in their regular programming. United Nations Radio, for example, produced more than 500 news and feature stories during this period, including features on

Human Rights Day, migrant workers, the commemoration of the abolition of slavery, food security as a human rights issue and the rise in the number of asylum-seekers.

Ending violence against women

16. The Department worked to promote and publicize the tenth anniversary of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on 25 November, a key date for the Secretary-General's "UNiTE to End Violence against Women" campaign. The anniversary saw the launch at United Nations Headquarters of the Secretary-General's Network of Men Leaders, selected to work in support of the UNiTE campaign. Informational materials, including a press kit and a redesigned campaign website (http://endviolence.un.org), were produced. The Secretary-General gave a press conference to mark the Day, which generated considerable media coverage. Most news pieces led with the launch of the Network of Men Leaders, quoting the Secretary-General extensively and focusing on his call to men and boys to end violence against women. Highlights of the coverage of the anniversary included pieces by major news wires, including the Associated Press (AP), Agence France-Presse (AFP), BBC, the German Press Agency (DPA) and Xinhua, which were picked up widely by online and print media outlets. Additionally, several broadcast pieces were aired, including by Al-Jazeera English and BBC News.

17. The Department worked to publicize the launch, at United Nations Headquarters in October 2009, of a joint United Nations/Council of Europe study on trafficking in organs, tissues and cells and trafficking in human beings for the purpose of the removal of organs. Press coverage of the launch was considerable. Most articles led with the key message of a call for an international convention on organ trafficking.

The rights of indigenous peoples

18. The Department coordinated a global launch of the first-ever United Nations *State of the World's Indigenous Peoples* report in January 2010. A comprehensive press kit containing chapter highlights, regional fact sheets and a main press release was prepared in English, French, Russian and Spanish. The main launch in New York featured a press conference with one of the authors of the report and the Chair of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Other launches were held in Belgium, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, the Philippines and the Russian Federation, with the assistance of United Nations information centres. The United Nations information centres in Canberra and Pretoria also conducted targeted media outreach for the report. In addition, the United Nations Information Centre in Mexico City held a launch event, which was covered by six television channels, three radio stations and five news agencies.

19. In 2009, the Department facilitated 17 new translations of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Priority was given to translations in indigenous languages, including Mapuche and Wichi (facilitated by the United Nations Information Centre in Buenos Aires) and Tsotsil, Tseltal and Ch'ol (facilitated by the United Nations Information Centre in Mexico City). The Declaration is now available in more than 30 languages.

General Assembly and the Human Rights Council

20. The Department organized a dozen press briefings and several interviews with human rights special rapporteurs and independent experts during the regular part of the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

21. For the launch in September 2009 of the report of the United Nations fact-finding mission on the Gaza conflict (which was appointed by the Human Rights Council), the Department worked with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to organize a press conference and interviews with the chief of the fact-finding mission, Justice Richard Goldstone. These included outlets such as Al-Jazeera (English and Arabic), ABC radio (Australia), BBC television and radio, CNN, Channel Four (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), Egyptian television, France 24 television and the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) of the United States of America.

D. Outreach programme on the Rwanda genocide and the United Nations

22. In December 2009, the programme manager of the United Nations Outreach Programme visited Rwanda to meet with Government representatives and key programme partners. A meeting with Rwandan participants in the "Visions of Rwanda" photography project provided an opportunity to show them the exhibit produced from their work, which was displayed at United Nations Headquarters for the commemoration of the fifteenth anniversary of the genocide in April 2009. A showing of the "Visions of Rwanda" photography exhibit was also organized at the Kigali Memorial Centre during January 2010.

E. Climate change

23. Raising awareness of the need for a new global deal to address climate change was a key United Nations priority in 2009. The Department worked to build momentum on the issue through the promotion of the summit on climate change that was held before the General Assembly debate in September 2009 and which was attended by 101 Heads of State and Government, and through the promotion of the Fifteenth Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), held in Copenhagen in December 2009, in which 119 leaders participated.

24. The Department of Public Information coordinated the communications efforts on climate change in its role as chair and coordinator for the more than 20 agencies that comprise the inter-agency United Nations Communications Group Task Force on Climate Change. Through the Task Force, the system-wide "Seal the Deal" campaign was developed and implemented. This campaign played a major role in raising awareness of the need to reach an international agreement to tackle climate change. In particular, the Department worked closely with the United Nations Environment Programme on the campaign and in support of UNFCCC on the Copenhagen conference. Throughout the year, the Department worked closely with the Secretary-General's Climate Change Support Team to produce and disseminate messages on climate change. The Department also worked closely with

non-governmental organizations and the advertising industry, which developed the "Hopenhagen" campaign.

25. The Department of Public Information played a lead role in organizing the communications effort for the September summit on climate change, producing the opening and closing segments of the summit, producing a press kit, branding the United Nations Secretariat Building for the summit, posting pre-recorded statements by world leaders on the summit website, providing media outreach and liaising with civil society organizations. During the Copenhagen conference, the Department of Public Information supported the work of the various members of the United Nations Communications Group climate change team, prepared a daily blog on the conference, maintained a United Nations Publications booth and prepared interviews for the Secretary-General. Additional activities related to climate change include the following:

(a) Original reporting from the Copenhagen conference was provided by the Department on the portal website "Gateway to the United Nations system's work on climate change" (www.un.org/climatechange). The Department also produced and maintained the website for the September climate change summit;

(b) Both United Nations Television and United Nations Radio provided extensive coverage. Each United Nations Radio language unit did special reporting and created a climate change link on its website. During this reporting period, each unit produced from 50 to 180 related stories, including news, features, interviews and a five-part climate change series. The Copenhagen conference was covered by two producers. In addition to news stories and features, photo galleries and videos were created by the team;

(c) The *United Nations Chronicle* devoted an entire issue (vol. XLVI, No. 3 and 4) to climate change.

26. The network of United Nations information centres played a key role in support of the "Seal the Deal" campaign. In early 2009, the United Nations Regional Information Centre in Brussels launched its second European public information campaign, entitled "CoolPlanet 2009", with a focus on climate change and in support of "Seal the Deal". The following United Nations information centres also played a key role in support of raising awareness about climate change:

(a) The United Nations Information Centre in Prague, working with the British Council, invited leading Czech cartoonists to participate in the "Cartooning for 'Seal the Deal'" campaign. The best 12 cartoons became part of a travelling exhibit that was displayed in the Czech Parliament, schools and public libraries;

(b) The United Nations Information Centre in Yaoundé participated in the Pan-African Parliamentarians' Network on Climate Change at the National Assembly of Cameroon in November 2009. The two-day conference brought together lawmakers from eight African countries to discuss climate change in the Congo Basin;

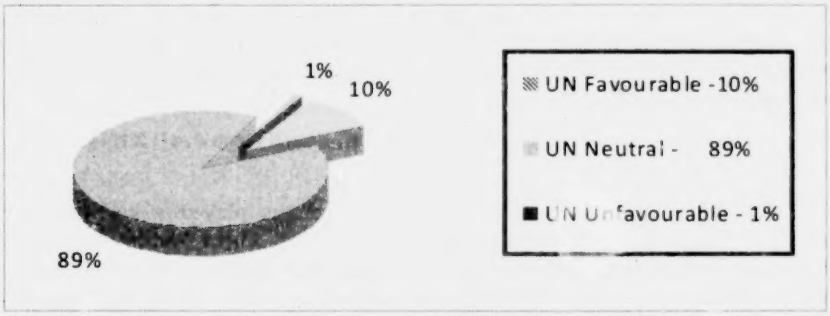
(c) The United Nations Information Centre in Manila partnered with a renewable energy firm in organizing a "climate change caravan" lecture forum for numerous elementary and high-school students in the Philippines;

(d) The United Nations Information Centre in Bogotá, together with the Universidad del Rosario, organized the first Model United Nations conference on climate change, attended by over 300 students.

27. Climate change was also the subject of the *World Economic and Social Survey 2009: Promoting Development, Saving the Planet*. The Department worked with several United Nations system partners to provide media support to the launch of the report that was held on 1 September 2009 in Geneva, generating coverage by the major wire services. Regional launches were organized by information centres and services in Bangkok, Islamabad, Johannesburg, Nairobi and New Delhi, in addition to a New York press conference that resulted in stories in the *New York Times* and the *Financial Times*.

28. The Department, in cooperation with the UNFCCC secretariat, analysed media coverage of the summit on climate change. A total of 1,977 worldwide media clippings were collected and analysed. More than 50 per cent of stories included at least one United Nations message about climate change, and 35 per cent mentioned or quoted a United Nations spokesperson. The majority of stories had either neutral or favourable coverage of the Organization, as is shown in figure V.

Figure V
Summit on Climate Change: September 2009



Total number of clippings that mention the United Nations: 1,599 out of 1,977.

E. Millennium Development Goals

29. The Department worked closely with the relevant substantive offices and United Nations system partners to coordinate and promote the launch of two major reports: the annual *Millennium Development Goals Report* (6 July) and the second report of the Millennium Development Goals Gap Task Force (16 September). It also played a major role, along with the United Nations Millennium Campaign, in the "Stand up and take action against poverty and for the Millennium Development Goals" initiative (17-19 October). Planning began in December for an inter-agency communications campaign on the Millennium Development Goals leading up to the high-level plenary meeting on the Millennium Development Goals, which the General Assembly decided would take place from 20 to 22 September 2010.

Launch of the *Millennium Development Goals Report 2009*

30. The Department formulated and carried out a communications strategy for the Secretary-General to launch the annual *Millennium Development Goals Report* in Geneva at the opening of the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council, in cooperation with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Additionally, information centres and United Nations Development Programme offices assisted in arranging regional launches in Brussels, Johannesburg, Moscow, New Delhi and Stockholm (organizing outreach in five Nordic countries), and information centres in Cairo and Mexico City coordinated the distribution of press releases. Nine press releases were prepared, translated into appropriate languages and disseminated to media electronically and online.

31. The launch generated considerable media coverage, including: 19 stories in English-language media in Australia, Europe and the United States, notably in the *Financial Times*, the *Guardian*, *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Huffington Post*; 17 stories in India, including in *The Times of India*, the *Hindustan Times* and a full-page feature in *The Statesman*; 24 stories in French-language media and media outlets in the Benelux countries; over 40 stories in Latin America; 3 stories in African media, including in *The Guardian* in Nigeria and South Africa's *Business Day*; 12 stories in the Middle East; and 24 stories in the media of the Nordic countries, including several broadcasts on television news. The coverage was largely in line with the main messages contained in the press releases.

32. The report of the Millennium Development Goals Gap Task Force was launched in New York in September 2009 by the Deputy Secretary-General and other senior United Nations officials.

"Stand up for the Millennium Development Goals" campaign

33. Building on their outstanding success in 2008, United Nations information centres played a key role in supporting the "Stand up and take action" initiative led by the United Nations Millennium Campaign. The initiative mobilized a record-breaking 173 million citizens gathered at over 3,000 events in more than 120 countries to literally "stand up" against poverty and for the Millennium Development Goals over a three-day period (16-18 October 2009). Many "Stand up" events received attention from national and local media and generated innovative new partnerships with civil society and the public sector, building strong awareness and support for the achievement of the Goals. "Stand up" events included the following:

(a) The United Nations Information Centre in Bogotá mobilized over 154,000 citizens, mostly students, to stand up against poverty, in coordination with the Ministry of Education;

(b) The United Nations Information Centre in Cairo joined forces with local religious leaders and the Government to mobilize 29 million people to stand up against poverty at weekly prayer services;

(c) The United Nations Information Centre in Manila worked with the country team and the Government, enlisting support from the President of the Philippines and her cabinet and generating participation by some 35 million people;

(d) The United Nations Information Centre in Pretoria worked with rugby and soccer federations to mobilize tens of thousands of people at sports events to show their support for the fight against poverty.

Promotion planned for 2010

34. The Department has begun coordinating planning for a major communications campaign for the Millennium Development Goals in 2010, working with its inter-agency partners through a task force under the United Nations Communications Group. The campaign will utilize stories gathered from field offices to highlight successes and communicate that the Goals can be achieved, and will aim to use online and new media to reach out to broad audiences.

F. Follow-up to the World Summit on the Information Society

35. The Department continued to promote the implementation of the conclusions of the World Summit on the Information Society by helping to promote the Global Alliance for Information and Communications Technologies and Development, specifically its annual meeting and its forum on how best to use information and communications technologies to strengthen education, held in Monterrey, Mexico, from 31 August to 3 September.

36. The Department also provided support to the fourth annual meeting of the Internet Governance Forum, held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, from 15 to 18 November. In reaching out to journalists and others who track Internet issues, particular efforts were made to use new and social media to enable people to follow the Forum from afar. More than 1,500 photos were posted on Flickr, while hundreds of video clips of the Forum and its workshops were uploaded on YouTube.

G. New Partnership for Africa's Development

37. As part of its efforts to focus global attention on the issues critical to Africa's development, the Department continued to strengthen and expand its advocacy activities by promoting the aims of NEPAD and by publicizing its achievements. This was done in close collaboration with the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and the Economic Commission for Africa.

38. *Africa Renewal* and *Afrique renouveau* (both available at www.un.org/africarenewal), the Department's flagship publications on Africa, continued to provide the basis for much of the Department's work to promote NEPAD. Among the major articles published during the reporting period were several on the global economic crisis and its impact on Africa, on climate change, on the Millennium Development Goals and on peace, security and human rights. Additionally, *Africa Renewal*'s short features service continued to produce and place short feature articles (800-1,000 words) in major media around the world. Republication allows the Department to reach the large audiences enjoyed by major national media, both print and electronic. Articles were also disseminated in the following ways:

(a) Between July 2009 and January 2010, 21 of the short feature articles were published 391 times in 122 different media in Africa and around the world (171 times in English, 165 times in French, 4 times in Swahili, twice in Portuguese,

once in Greek and once in Spanish). The article titled "Is Africa's land up for grabs?" alone was published 47 times. The articles, based on news stories which appeared in three different issues of the magazine, were published in 42 countries, including Argentina, Belgium, Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, the Czech Republic, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal, Switzerland, the United Republic of Tanzania and the United States of America. Additionally, the articles appeared in 35 different online blogs, messages sent on Twitter and global websites;

(b) The Department relied on the network of United Nations information centres to identify local print media outlets that were open to reprinting its short feature articles. The United Nations Information Centre in Windhoek, for example, facilitates the publication, on a regular basis, of *Africa Renewal* articles in one of the local newspapers in English;

(c) United Nations Radio produced some of the articles featured in *Africa Renewal* magazine for broadcast by its radio programme "United Nations and Africa". The project was produced in collaboration with United Nations Radio and some United Nations entities based in Africa. The United Nations Information Centre in Bujumbura, in its radio programme co-produced with the national radio of Burundi, broadcast a story on the global economic crisis and its impact on African economies.

39. In January 2010, the Department unveiled a new *Africa Renewal* website and began an expanded utilization of new media tools. The website, which has a new visual identity and a streamlined information design, not only hosts content from *Africa Renewal* magazine but also provides more original web-only content produced by the Department, as well as access to new media tools. It features Twitter feeds in English and French, provides access to the Department's Facebook and YouTube pages and runs regular and updated newsfeeds on African issues from across the United Nations system. Plans are also under way to launch a new blog, which will be accessible to a select number of journalists in Africa and United Nations Africa experts.

40. A survey of *Africa Renewal* readers, posted online and distributed in print versions from April 2008 through December 2009, found that 53 per cent of readers understood more about Africa's priorities from reading *Africa Renewal*. Sixty-eight per cent said that they had found information in *Africa Renewal* that was not easily available elsewhere.

Figure VI

Do you understand more about Africa's priority issues from reading/visiting *Africa Renewal*?

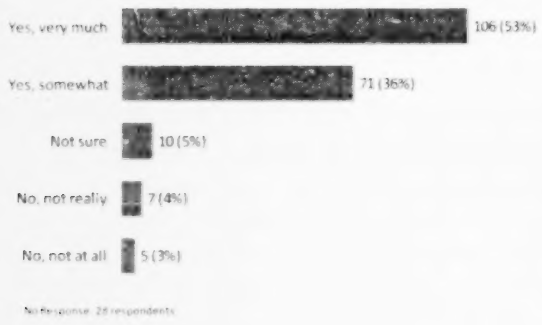
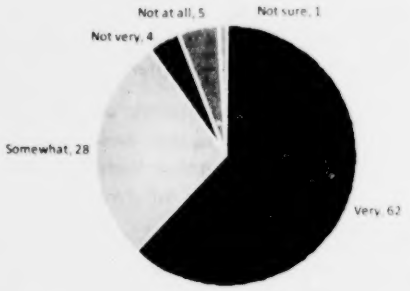


Figure VII
How useful/interesting do you find *Africa Renewal* information on these subject areas?

Topic: Women



III. A culture of evaluation

41. The analysis of the work of the Department with the media, specifically the impact of public information and communications campaigns, is an area in which the Department has been working to establish more systematic assessment. These media monitoring projects and surveys, carried out by the Department of Public Information's Evaluation and Communications Research Unit, help programme managers to improve their communications campaigns, activities and programmes. For example, a media monitoring project on the Millennium Development Goals showed that simpler communications messages received wider pick-up, and that more attention should be paid to how messages play out in different regions. These lessons learned have been applied to recent communications campaigns on priority themes. Survey data are also used to guide strategies and to improve programmes. A 2009 survey of United Nations information centres elicited information about the problems field offices faced in disseminating information online. These technical and organizational problems will be addressed by the Department in 2010.

42. In 2009, the Department conducted surveys and other types of evaluation of the following programmes, events and products:

(a) Sixty-second annual Department of Public Information/Non-Governmental Organization Conference;[4]

(b) United Nations communications groups at the country level;[5]

(c) Communications campaigns on disarmament and climate change;

(d) "UN4U" programme held in New York City;

(e) Global Model United Nations workshops and conference;

(f) *Africa Renewal*;

(g) United Nations website and United Nations information centre websites;

(h) Dag Hammarskjöld Library services;

(i) United Nations information centre briefings.

[4] For survey results, please see A/AC.198/2010/4.

[5] For survey results, please see A/64/262.

Part Two: the network of United Nations information centres

I. Background

1. The network of United Nations information centres, now fully integrated with the work of the strategic communication services, is key to the realization of the Department of Public Information's communications strategies. Through the realignment of resources, the upgrading of the use of information and communications technologies, staff training, building partnerships at local and regional levels and regular interaction with Headquarters, United Nations information centres are now better prepared to act as the "public voice" of the Organization in the locations they serve.

2. During the reporting period, the network of 63 United Nations information centres continued to promote the communications priorities of the Organization, disseminate key messages to local audiences in their own languages and strengthen local partnerships, while adapting themselves to the new demands arising from advances in information and communications technology and increasing security challenges.

II. Reaching target audiences in local languages

3. A key element in the work of United Nations information centres is the dissemination of information in local languages. Currently, the information centres have the capacity to work in 48 languages and have produced information materials in over 150 languages. These materials are disseminated through websites, newspapers, radio, television and educational and public outreach activities, as well as through new media and social networking tools. Activities undertaken by United Nations information centres include the following:

(a) The United Nations Regional Information Centre in Brussels maintains a website in 13 languages, and its library offers users access to information resources in most of the languages of Western Europe. The Centre's monthly magazines and newsletters are produced in English, French, German and Portuguese. The Centre also provides information materials in Portuguese to all United Nations offices operating in Portuguese-speaking countries. In addition, it compiles a daily press review in English, drawn from material in 10 local languages. With the generous support of the Government of Belgium, key information materials are translated and printed, and United Nations videos are subtitled in most of the languages of the region;

(b) The United Nations Information Centre in Mexico City translated the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples into Chinanteco del Norte, Mazahua, Nahuatl del Istmo, Totonaco de la Costa, Tseltal and Zapoteco de la Planicie Costera. The United Nations Information Centre in Buenos Aires translated the Declaration into Mapuche and Wichi. The United Nations Information Centre in Tehran and the United Nations Office in Minsk translated the Declaration into Persian and Belarusian, respectively, while information centres in Ankara, Brussels and New Delhi translated it into Turkish, Greek and Hindi, respectively;

(c) The United Nations Information Centre in Pretoria produced a series of public service announcements on "Say 'no' to xenophobia: voices for tolerance and diversity", which was aired on a network of community radio stations run by the South African Broadcasting Corporation between 21 March and 30 April 2009. The languages used included Tsonga, Setswana, Sesotho, Siswati Venda, Xhosa and Zulu;

(d) The United Nations Information Centre in Rio de Janeiro in 2009 produced the Portuguese version of the videos "Year in Review 2008" and "End Poverty: Millennium Development Goals 2015";

(e) The United Nations Information Service in Vienna translated the Universal Declaration of Human Rights into Hungarian, Slovenian and Slovak.

4. United Nations information centres also translated the following Department of Public Information publications: "Sixty ways the United Nations makes a difference" (Turkish); "Building a stronger United Nations for a better world" (Azerbaijani); "Charter of the United Nations and Statute of the International Court of Justice" (Persian); and *Everything You Always Wanted to Know about the United Nations* (Armenian).

Placement of op-eds by United Nations information centres

5. With their knowledge of the local media in their respective countries, United Nations information centres are in a good position to place op-eds by the Secretary-General and senior United Nations officials in national newspapers, often translating them into local languages. For example, in September 2009, the Secretary-General's op-ed on climate change entitled "Now is our time" was translated by United Nations information centres into Czech, German, Hungarian, Japanese, Persian, Romanian, Slovak and Slovenian and placed in national newspapers.

Establishment of a United Nations information centre in Luanda

6. Serving the needs of Portuguese-speaking countries in Africa has been a long-standing concern for both the Member States and the Department. To that end, the biennial budget for 2010-2011, approved by the General Assembly on 23 December 2009, included funding and posts for the establishment of a United Nations information centre in Luanda. The Department will work closely with the Government of Angola, which has offered rent-free premises, to ensure that an information centre is established in Luanda on a priority basis. It has already begun the process of classifying the posts that will be assigned to the new centre and identifying initial furniture and equipment needs. It is envisaged that the new centre will have close ties with the United Nations Information Centre in Rio de Janeiro and with the Portuguese Desk at the United Nations Regional Information Centre in Brussels.

III. Enhancing local and regional partnerships

Joint communications activities at the country level

7. To celebrate United Nations Day 2009, the network of United Nations information centres, in cooperation with United Nations country teams, organized a range of activities, including the "UN4U" outreach campaign, lectures, United Nations "open houses" with presentations, film screenings and exhibits, often with

the participation of high-level Government officials, civil society and the media. Other activities included the following:

(a) United Nations information centres mobilized 21,000 students in 35 countries at some 135 schools and universities in the second annual "UN4U" campaign;

(b) The United Nations Information Centre in Tokyo, in partnership with United Nations entities, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Model United Nations-Japan and others, organized the first "United Nations week", which included a seminar on the role of business in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and a workshop on the Model United Nations, in which the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information participated;

(c) In a new partnership between the United Nations Regional Information Centre in Brussels and the Athens Metro, a selection of United Nations priority issues and events will be promoted throughout 2010, utilizing the 133 video monitors in the 23 stations of the city's underground rapid transit system, which is used by approximately 170 million people each year. Posters commemorating the International Year of Biodiversity and the International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust have already been displayed, and the Millennium Development Goals will be among future issues to be promoted.

Expanding partnerships at the regional level

8. In a number of cases, the work of information centres extends beyond the borders of individual countries, with the aim of enhanced regional cooperation and a stronger regional message. Activities include the following:

(a) Spearheaded by the United Nations Regional Information Centre in Brussels, the Department of Public Information's cooperation with the European Union in undertaking joint communications projects has increased in the past few years. In order to enhance this cooperation and broaden its visibility, the United Nations and the European Union have agreed to work together on a new communications initiative, "Partnership for a better world". Throughout 2010, the network of European Union delegations, in partnership with United Nations information centres, will use some key international days to encourage Governments and civil society actors to focus attention on pressing global issues. The issues covered by the eight international days identified for this communications initiative include: universal human rights; the rights of women, children and indigenous people; press freedom; and key global issues such as food, poverty and the environment. For each international day, communication materials produced by the two organizations will be compiled into joint electronic toolkits. "Partnership for a better world" will encourage support from major European newspapers and broadcasters, as well as from social media sites, artists and entertainers;

(b) The United Nations Information Centre in Manama provided media and communications assistance in promoting the Western Asia ministerial meeting of the Economic and Social Council, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and the World Health Organization on "Addressing non-communicable diseases and injuries: major challenges to sustainable development in the 21st century", which was hosted by the Government of Qatar in Doha on 10 and 11 May 2009. A press release was issued and two press conferences were organized. The Al-Jazeera

Children's Channel was involved in the meeting to raise awareness about non-communicable diseases.

IV. Harnessing new information and communications technologies

United Nations information centre websites

9. All United Nations information centres now have dedicated websites of their own. These websites offer information in five official languages (Arabic, English, French, Spanish and Russian) and in 33 other languages. In December 2009, the highest number of page views recorded among the information centre websites was approximately 11 million in Mexico City, followed by Vienna (10.5 million), Brussels (4.8 million), Tokyo (4.7 million), Warsaw (2.6 million), Bogotá (1.5 million) and Prague (1.1 million).

10. The United Nations information centres web page, hosted on the United Nations website, is a gateway to all 63 information centres, including their individual websites. It is available in all six official languages and carries blog stories sorted by thematic areas, as well as a photo gallery, showing various activities undertaken by the information centres. In 2009, the portal registered 650,000 page views in all languages.

11. The United Nations Information Centre in Bujumbura registered the highest number of page views to its website among all information centres in Africa in 2009. The Centre, which closely collaborates with the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB), has set its website as the welcome page for the Centre's Internet clients and visitors. The Centre's library has an average of over 1,000 visitors per month, the majority of whom come to benefit from its Internet service, which is available free of charge. The fact that some United Nations documents on the website are in Kirundi, a national language, also helped attract visitors to its website.

Social networking tools

12. The rapidly expanding social networking tools have become a necessity for enhancing the outreach of the United Nations, particularly to young audiences. A number of United Nations information centres created accounts with representative social networking sites. Some centres also organized blog competitions and undertook SMS (short message service) text messaging campaigns. Activities undertaken include the following:

(a) The United Nations Information Centre in Bucharest, together with the Embassy of the United Kingdom, organized an online blog competition where young people ranging from 17 to 35 years old were asked to calculate their carbon footprint on a website and to sign the "Seal the Deal" petition;

(b) The United Nations Information Centre in Rio de Janeiro, in partnership with TIM, the country's largest mobile phone provider, and MTV Brazil, launched the "ONU Verde" campaign on United Nations Day to promote a greener United Nations. TIM sent a message to over nine million of its youngest customers asking, "What are you doing to take care of the environment?" MTV Brazil spread the message of the campaign during its scheduled programming. The campaign will culminate on World Environment Day, 5 June 2010.

United Nations information centres with Facebook, Twitter and YouTube accounts, as of December 2009

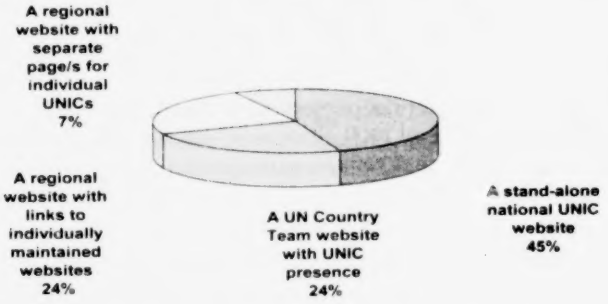
Facebook: Bogotá, Bucharest, Buenos Aires, Dar es Salaam, Jakarta, La Paz, Lima, Manila, Mexico City, New Delhi, Tokyo, Vienna, Warsaw and Washington, D.C.

Twitter: Bogotá, Dar es Salaam, Jakarta, Mexico City, New Delhi, Pretoria, Rio de Janeiro, Tehran, Tunis and Vienna

YouTube: Bogotá, Kathmandu, Lima, Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro and Washington, D.C.

13. In 2009, the Department conducted a review of United Nations information centre websites in order to identify potential areas for improvement. The review showed that the websites were appealing, professional and well-organized but that they fell short in some cases in terms of the timely updating of website content, quality assurance and prominent promotion of United Nations issues and information campaigns.

Figure I
Opinions expressed by United Nations information centres on the best use of web-related resources


A regional website with separate page/s for individual UNICs 7%
A regional website with links to individually maintained websites 24%
A UN Country Team website with UNIC presence 24%
A stand-alone national UNIC website 45%

These information centres ranked web-related training as the most important way the Department of Public Information could better support them in that area of their work.

Types of support needed by United Nations information centres

Ranking	Support[a] needed
1	Facilitate access to web-related online training
2	Provide guidelines on writing for the web
3	Provide guidelines on the use of new media
4	Provide guidelines on web design, including accessibility
5	Provide guidelines on website security issues
6	Provide informal peer networking on web-related issues

[a] Based on the results of a survey carried out by the Department of Public Information in which information centres were asked to rank the types of support needed from Headquarters and the Information Centres Service.

Training for United Nations information staff

14. In September 2009, the Department organized a three-day training session on crisis communications at the United Nations Information Centre in Mexico City, with the participation of 11 staff members from the information centres in Latin America. A discussion on closer collaboration in radio and video production was conducted via video link with Headquarters. Following the session, United Nations Radio's FTP (file transfer protocol), general guidelines and script guidelines for UNiFeed, and some other relevant documents, were distributed to all the information centres in the region.

15. The United Nations Information Service in Vienna organized a training session on new media on 19 November 2009. Staff members from the information centres in Bucharest, Moscow, Prague and Warsaw participated in the session.

Tools of support

16. A revised manual for the United Nations information centres, a working tool that provides the information centres with critical information, tips and guidance on their day-to-day operations, was updated and launched online in February 2010. Starting with an overview and historical background of United Nations information centres, the manual covers a range of areas, including communications priorities, tools for media relations and public outreach, media monitoring, reference libraries, partnerships and constituency-building, administrative procedures, reporting and evaluation and information technology. By maintaining the manual as an online reference tool, as compared with a hard copy publication, the Department is able to link it to other sources of information and guidance and to update it as often as necessary as new guidelines are developed and new policies are put into effect.

17. The Department is also developing the Centres Information Management System, a new web-based tool to assist colleagues in the United Nations information centres network and at Headquarters in the collection, analysis and reporting of programme and administrative data. With the overall goal of increasing efficiency and data integrity, this new tool aims to modernize the reporting and data collection practices currently in place at United Nations information centres and Headquarters.

It will replace multiple local databases with a centralized data repository hosted on the main server infrastructure of the United Nations in New York. The system will also replace forms transmitted via e-mail and stored locally on multiple workstations with a standardized and secure online interface available at any time to colleagues in the field and at Headquarters for them to input and access information. The Centres Information Management System is expected to be launched during the first quarter of 2010.

V. Ongoing challenges

Physical conditions and security challenges at United Nations information centres

18. Several United Nations information centres benefit from being located at Government-provided rent-free or rent-subsidized premises, offsetting part of the cost of operating these offices. A number of information centres are facing increasing expenditures related to maintenance and security, however, and some have relocated or are expected to do so, for the most part with United Nations country teams. After two relocations, each owing to security concerns, the information centres in Algiers and Islamabad are in new premises with the local United Nations country team, while the information centre in Jakarta is actively seeking new premises after it had to vacate the previous building, which was deemed unsafe owing to land subsidence and earthquake damage. In addition, the information centres in Lima and Mexico City are in the process of moving into shared premises with members of the United Nations country team.

19. Moving to new premises is costly, time-consuming and disruptive to operations, but is often the only viable option. To reduce costs, the Department is taking steps such as reducing the overall physical space of some information centres, thus bringing down the cost of maintenance, utilities and other apportioned expenses. This, for example, is the case in the United Nations Regional Information Centre in Brussels, which will share part of its premises with another United Nations entity that is part of the country team. In fact, since 1991 almost half of all United Nations information centres have been sharing premises with members of the local United Nations country team.

20. Maintaining security of United Nations information centre premises remains a major challenge. While the budget allocation for security in the past two bienniums fell short of actual and growing needs, an increase in the first year of the 2010-2011 biennium should enable the Department to make all but a handful of information centres security compliant, barring further deterioration in the security environment.

Meeting equipment needs

21. Modern and updated equipment is critical to effective communications work. One of the challenges faced by the network of United Nations information centres is updating their office automation and data processing equipment. Inventory data collected in 2008 for 25 information centres located in five regions indicate that the average age of desktop computers currently in use is eight years. These aging computers are often assigned to light-duty tasks in public areas, such as libraries and Internet access stations. They are neither user-friendly nor energy-efficient, and can be costly to maintain.

22. To disseminate United Nations messages to a broader audience and to take advantage of modern communications tools such as new media and social networking, the United Nations information centres have an ongoing need to upgrade server resources. At present, they rely on one virtual web server located in New York and a five-year-old physical server located in Brussels to service more than 30 websites and several online communications campaign initiatives.

Conclusions

The Department of Public Information is committed to promoting the work of the United Nations by providing timely, accurate, impartial, comprehensive and coherent information to the widest possible global audience. The Department of Public Information has carried out its mandate by adopting a strategic approach and by forging a close partnership with United Nations system organizations through the United Nations Communications Group. By identifying key priority areas at the beginning of each year, and by undertaking regular evaluations of its campaigns and services, the Department has been able to pursue well-defined and targeted delivery of information products and activities. The Department has also greatly expanded the use of new communications tools, including social media. As a result, its ability to connect with newer audiences, including students and youth, has been greatly enhanced.

In informing the world about the work of the United Nations and mobilizing global public opinion in support of a revitalized world body, the Department of Public Information relies increasingly on its network of United Nations information centres. A good communications strategy by itself is of limited value unless it reaches the audience it is meant for. Aware of this challenge, the Department has taken measures to further strengthen United Nations information centres and to fully integrate them into the overall communications strategy of the Department. Through the realignment of resources, the upgrading of the use of information and communications technologies, building partnerships at the local and regional levels and regular interaction with Headquarters, United Nations information centres have been equipped for success.